

Remarks on *astuac*

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Jörundur Hilmarsson has given us (AArmLing 4, 1983, 5-15) an imaginative and highly plausible derivation for the perennially troublesome lexeme *astuac* "God." The semantics and morphological status of "creator" are eminently appropriate for this form. A morphology that would form such a construction from the compound nominalization CON-STITUT-AGENT is highly attractive; we may note that we find a morphological parallel to the first element in Skt. *saṃsthāpana-m* "establishment, fixing," i.e., CON- + factitive of *sthā-*.

Hilmarsson's proposal raises some interesting points of the history of Armenian and of comparative Indo-European which arise among the points he discusses in his excellent attention to the rules of Indo-European word formation. His analysis of *a-* as **sm-* before *s* is highly valuable, because it accords the same treatment to **m* resulting from the syllabic nasal as we find for original nonsyllabic **m*. This makes more secure a perfectly straightforward derivation of *ast* "star" from **(s)m-ster-*, along lines of my discussion in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Congress of Linguists* (1972) II, p. 1050 §7 and footnote 14; see also AArmLing 3, 1982, 55.

Hilmarsson's discussion of *-stu-* is meticulous and wide ranging in bringing in the pertinent considerations. Because of the agreement of Indic *sthūrā-* "thick" with Balto-Slavic *stūra-* it seems we must regard a root configuration of **stuH-* as current in late IE. Of course, we know that in zero-grade the sequence laryngeal + glide metathe-

sizes by rule in certain environments in IE; I have formulated this rule in the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26, 1975, 102. Because of the pervasive root *sthā-* in Indic we cannot be sure whether the aspirate in *sthūrā-* results from a carryover from the simple root **steH_a-*, or whether the *H* of **stHu-* is analogically represented twice, once in the aspirate and once in the length, in this form. Furthermore we might put *stuar* in direct relation with Balto-Slavic *stūra-*, except with different syllabification of the sequence **-uHr-*. Finally, we might expect **stH-* to yield an aspirate **stʰ*, to judge on the analogy of **skH > sx*.

It therefore seems quite reasonable to reconstruct **sm-stuH-*, which would automatically syllabify in position before vowel to **amstu-*. Lith. *atstūs* is in any case not diagnostic because of the known recent productivity of oxytone *ù*-stems among adjectives in that language. The form class of Skt. *suṣṭhú* "aptly, well" seems not to be an advantageous basis on which to erect a far-reaching comparison.

We now turn to the element *-ac* and its stem class. Hilmarsson raises many valuable and pertinent points (12-13), but some of his mentions detract from the clear result that can be reached here both for IE and for Armenian word formation. H. is correct in observing (12) that adjectival *-ac* belongs with *(-a)-wor*, and these with *a*-stem adjectives; but there is no necessity to assume, as he does (13), that **-aḡos* was in turn a thematized root noun — if that is so, it was pre-IE. H. regards the *a*-stem property of such adjectives as lacking an explanation. As I argue in detail elsewhere, the Armenian *a*-stem adjectival suffixes, many of which are old compound finals, represent one of the (two) principal reflexes of the old IE epicene thematics which live on into Greek as the two-ending class of adjectives.

Thus IE had three classes of formations: thematic agents, as seen in *(-a)-wor*, which resulted generally in *a*-stem adjectives; root agents, as exemplified by Lat. *rēmex*, which leave no systematic trace in Armenian; and root action nouns, as seen in Lat. (passive infin.) *agī* (*indāgēs* involves further, purely Latin, complexities), which resulted in such Armenian forms as the *o*-stem *-ac*. (H. is surely right that *hastuac* has its *h-* best credited to *hastem* : Icel. *fastur*, etc.) There was also an ancient *nomen actionis*, which could be concretized like other such *nomina*, represented by surviving zero-grade thematic neuters such as Lat. *iugum* = Arm. *luc*.

The reason for the failure of *astuac* to transfer with the adjectives to the *a*-stem class is not stated by H. (13) as clearly as it might be, though his reasoning, I think, is absolutely correct. There was not only a blockage caused by the semantic distance that the noun had assumed over time; quite simply, *astuac* did not functionally qualify for the transfer because it was a noun, and therefore could not assume the

epicene roles typical of the adjectives. This explanation, of course, depends heavily on my accounting of the genesis of Armenian *a*-stem adjectival suffixes. *Astuac*, therefore, did not follow the other substantives in *-ac*, as H. claims (13); it was simply left stranded as a relic equivalent to *σπατηγός* by virtue of not being an adjective. The nouns in *-wor* were more easily able to transfer class because of their overt *o*-vocalism.

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